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November 30, 1962
1:00 - 3:40 p.m.

1. Nuclear Test Ban
2. Non-proliferation

The United States:

The Secretary
The Under Secretary
Ambassador Thompson
EUR - Richard H. Davis
Mr. Kamman, Interpreter

The Soviet Union:

First Dep. Premier Anastas Mikoyan
Ambassador Dobrynin
Mr. Kornienko, Counselor, Sov. Emb.
Mr. Chistov
Mr. Vinogradov, Interpreter

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1. Nuclear Test Ban

Mr. Mikoyan picked up the Secretary's reference to the nuclear test ban and observed the Soviet Union had made a number of proposals. The Soviets had learned last summer that American and British scientists had proposed that sealed boxes could be used to detect underground tests. This would eliminate the need for "on ground" personnel. These sealed boxes would be placed in earthquake zones in neighboring states provided their governments agreed. Soviet scientists had agreed with the conclusions of their fellow-American-British scientists on the feasibility of such a system.

The question had been asked, Mr. Mikoyan continued, how one could guarantee that these sealed boxes would actually be set up in the Soviet Union. This was a difficult question to ignore. Chairman Khrushchev had told Sir Frank Roberts some-time ago, and the day before yesterday Ambassador Soldotov in London had said to Lord Howe that during the construction of these stations and for the delivery of these sealed boxes,

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foreign observers could be present. They could also be present when the boxes were removed. But they would not tolerate foreign observers as spies. There could be no cameras, perhaps portholes of planes would have to be covered up -- just those things which were necessary, of course -- but the Soviet Union would not separate underground from other tests. All other kinds of explosions can be easily detected. These automatic devices in sealed boxes can easily detect any underground test. It was now up to the American side to decide whether it wished an agreement.

The Secretary said we will be discussing these matters further but he must state that these black boxes do not distinguish between earthquakes and possible underground tests. Mr. Mikoyan interjected that the British and American scientists had said they did. The Secretary responded that we had urged a meeting of the scientists to ascertain the true facts, to which Mr. Mikoyan responded they had already met.

The Secretary pointed out that British and American scientists had not concluded that these devices could detect the difference between earthquakes and underground nuclear tests. The scientists' conclusion had addressed itself to the question of whether unmanned boxes could substitute for manned stations. The Soviets asserted the devices could detect underground tests. The United States could not say whether the Soviet Union has such instruments or not, particularly when they had orbited two men within 5 kilometers of each other in outer space. What is needed is to have our scientists meet and determine the facts. We would hope that they might find it possible to agree. This, however, is not a policy question but a matter of fact. It was a question of whether both sides can have assurance that an agreement was being carried out.

Mr. Mikoyan

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Mr. Mikoyan replied, yes, that is the question. If the scientists find it possible to agree, then the question moves into the sphere of political policy.

2. Non-proliferation

For example, the Secretary continued, one aspect of NATO-Warsaw Pact relationship was the question of the non-transfer of nuclear weapons. This question too had been touched on in his conversation with Gromyko and he thought we were coming to a point where we could speak about this in precise terms. The Secretary expressed the hope that he would see Ambassador Dobrynin before going to the NATO Ministerial meeting in Paris. Some progress had been made on this subject over the past year and the Secretary had talked with certain of his colleagues in other governments, but only in general terms. He emphasized that reaching agreement on this question could be an important step.

Turning again to the nuclear test ban, the Secretary observed that the attitude of Peiping was important. If the Chinese would not cooperate on the test ban or a non-proliferation agreement, then there could be no agreement. He noted there had been certain articles published in Jen Min Jih Pao in Peiping which indicated Chinese opposition. He asked Mr. Mikoyan if he had an impression whether or not the Chinese would cooperate. The Secretary expressed the personal belief that the United States and the Soviet Union have a common interest to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons regardless of the political or ideological system of other states.

Mr. Mikoyan replied, the United States does not recognize China and yet the Secretary was asking him. He could only speak on behalf of the USSR interest, not China. This question should be addressed to the Chinese.

Mr. Mikoyan

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Mr. Mikoyan continued, we should decide on our own positions. He then asked the Secretary whether he understood him correctly to say that if China opposes these two proposals there could be no possibility of agreement.

The Secretary answered the two proposals were somewhat different. In the case of the test ban, there was a provision in the treaty that the signatories could elect to free themselves of their obligations if someone else tests. As regards a non-transfer agreement, the proposal which he and Mr. Gromyko had been discussing began with two important paragraphs. First, it was proposed that the four existing nuclear powers agree not to transfer to national governments or to help national governments obtain nuclear weapons. The second paragraph provided that non-nuclear powers would agree not to receive or to manufacture nuclear weapons. If there was a government capable of manufacturing nuclear weapons and refuses to sign this agreement, then it is hard to see how the agreement would have meaning. For instance, we assume the Soviet Union would be greatly concerned if Germany refused to sign. On our part, we would be greatly concerned if China, or indeed any one of twenty other countries capable of developing atomic weapons, refused to sign.

Mr. Mikoyan observed he was not a specialist in this matter, but he was apprehensive that this proposal might provide a loophole through which nuclear weapons could come under some other flag, such as an international body. Through this the Germans may have access to nuclear weapons. This the Soviets cannot accept. Even now the West Germans (Strauss) are saying don't give us nuclear weapons in our own hands, since we will have access to them through NATO. If this proposal is designed to provide a by-pass, it would not be acceptable to the USSR.

The Secretary

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The Secretary replied that Mr. Mikoyan was correct. This was a key issue. The United States was prepared to agree on no transfer, either directly or indirectly, of nuclear weapons to national governments, but we must be absolutely clear on what we mean. We must discuss this more, as we believe it has real possibilities. The United States is not interested in increasing the number of governments who have nuclear weapons. We have had differences with our friends in Paris. We consider the point made by Mr. Mikoyan a serious one and we will want to be more precise and have further discussions in detail with Ambassador Dobrynin.

Mr. Mikoyan responded that he understood the United States as a country did not want to increase the number of governments who have nuclear weapons, but, he asked, can the United States withstand pressure from its Allies to transfer to national governments or to a supranational body these weapons? In case war should break out, the Soviet Union would use nuclear weapons in the interest of its Allies but it would not give weapons to them.

The Secretary remarked that we must be clear on what we are talking about. Both the USSR and the USA have nuclear weapons in direct support of our Allies, though the warheads remain in our hands and cannot be used without our consent. This does not prevent us from consulting with our NATO Allies to the greatest extent possible about the deployment and use of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union could also consult with its Warsaw Allies. This would not prevent an agreement being reached. The United States does not want other governments to be in a position to use nuclear weapons by their own decision.

Mr. Mikoyan concluded his remarks by saying he understood that the Secretary would continue his talks on this subject with Ambassador Dobrynin.

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